
“Oh, To Be Like Thee”



Living Day to Day as a Christian

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Lesson One: The Denial of Self

Text: Matthew 16:24-26

Introduction

1. Since the introduction of sin into the world, men have:
 - a. Cast off the love and fear of God and given themselves to the dominion and love of self.
 - b. Acted selfishly making their own will and honor most important to them. (Rom. 3:9-18)
2. Recognizing sinful man's need:
 - a. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10)
 - b. God gave him the gospel to bring him back to the state from which he had fallen.
3. The first step toward this restoration is to deny self. (Matt. 16:24-26)

I. Some General Observations About Self-Denial

- A. For one to follow Jesus, it must be by his own freewill and convictions voluntarily renouncing everything which might hinder his discipleship. (1 Thess. 5:21)
- B. Self-denial: complete submission to the will of God.

II. What Self-Denial Does Not Mean Nor Require

- A. It does not mean that one:
 1. Has no obligation to take care of himself and his affairs. (1 Tim. 5:8)
 2. Must refuse temporal honors and riches bestowed on him lawfully and honorably.
- B. It does not give one license to be careless of his life, health and family.
- C. It does not require:
 1. That one divest himself of the comfort and convenience of material benefits of this world derived from employment or industry. (Acts 5:4)
 2. Self-hate. (Eph. 5:29)

III. Vital Principles and Factors of Self-Denial

- A. When the vital factors and principles are considered, one learns what is to be denied.
- B. Those things which are to be denied.
 1. Understanding. So far as not to lean upon it independent of divine instruction. (Prov. 3:5-6; 28:26)
 2. The will. So far as it opposes the will of God. (Eph. 5:17; 2 Pet. 2:9-10; Titus 1:7)
 3. Affections. When they go beyond the limits God has put in place. (Col. 3:1-7; Jas. 1:13-15)
 4. Physical gratification. When seeking its fulfillment is out of the due course God has given. (Rom. 6:12-13; Matt. 5:29-30; 1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4)
 5. Honors of the world—Praise of men. When they become a snare. (Heb. 11:24-26; John 12:42-43; Gal. 6:14)

6. Profit.
 - a. When obtained in an unlawful way.
 - b. When it is in opposition to the faith of Christ and one's usefulness in God's service. (Mark 10:21-22)
7. Friends and relatives. So far as they oppose the truth and would influence one to also oppose it. (Matt. 10:34-37)
8. Personal rights and liberties. When failing to do so would place a stumbling block before another. (1 Cor. 8:13; 10:23)
9. One's own life. For Christ's sake when to save it would be a compromise with error and the forces of error. (Matt. 10:38-39; Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:9-10)

Conclusion

1. Everything sinful and that fails to qualify as glorifying God must be denied however pleasant and apparently advantageous it may seem to us.
2. We must deny self, take up the cross and follow Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that so little emphasis is placed on self denial when teaching one what he must do to be saved?
2. How is self-denial related to "the first and great commandment" found in Matthew 22:37-38?
3. What are some things that can hinder one from being a proper disciple of Jesus Christ?
4. What are some problems one will suffer as a Christian if he does not deny self?
5. What does it mean to "take up his cross?"
6. How is one to "lose his life?"
7. How is denying self related to the warning which follows in Matthew 16:26?

Lesson Two: Having the Mind of Christ

Text: Philippians 2:1-11

Introduction

1. All true religion is centered on Jesus Christ. It consists of doctrines He revealed, principles He exhibited, blessings He provides, duties He enforces and the spirit He manifested.
 - Therefore, the true Christian is one who believes those doctrines, is influenced by those principles, enjoys those blessings, discharges those duties and displays that spirit.
2. These facts are recognized in Philippians 2:1-11.
 - a. The Philippians are exhorted to stand together in harmony, having one mind. (1-4)
 - b. The image after which they are to pattern themselves is held up for them to view—it is the image of Christ. (5-8)
3. Christians are to become like Christ. They are to:
 - a. Put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
 - b. Be like Jesus. (1 John 3:2)
 - c. Be partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4)
 - d. Be transformed into Christ's image. (2 Cor. 3:18)
 - i. This transformation is accomplished by the renewing of the mind. (Rom. 12:1-2)
 - ii. The mind they are to have is the mind of Christ. (Phil. 2:5)

I. What Is the Mind of Christ?

- A. It is a mind of spiritual knowledge. (John 5:30; Jas. 1:21-22; 2 Tim. 2:15)
- B. It is a mind of obedience. (John 6:38; Heb. 4:14-16; 5:8-9)
- C. It is a mind of devotion—worship. (Luke 2:41-52)
- D. It is a mind of meekness and humility.
 1. In coming to earth as a man. (Phil. 2:7)
 2. He was a perfect example of humility while on earth. (John 13:3-17)
- E. It is a mind of service and work. (John 9:4; Acts 10:38)

II. How Can I Attain the Mind of Christ?

- A. By studying Him as a model.
 1. Keep the things seen in Him before your eyes.
 2. Make yourself familiar with His life and the path taken in it.
 3. Meditate on Him.
- B. By imitating and conforming to His example.
 1. Act toward family as He did.
 2. Act toward friends as He did.
 3. Act toward the world as He did.

 4. Act toward God as He did.

5. Act toward work as He did.
 6. Act toward the church as He did.
- C. By reading and studying all of His word.
1. He is God's exclusive spokesman today. (Heb. 1:1-2)
 2. All is to be done in His name. (Col. 3:17)
 - 3 His words are the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

Conclusion

1. If we have the mind of Christ and think like Him, we will be like Him. (Prov. 23:7)
2. To rightfully wear the name of Christ, we must have His mind.
3. If we have the mind of Christ, we will think like Him which will cause us to act like Him so that we can be received by the Father as He was and be blessed with eternal life as a joint-heir with Him.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Romans 12:1-2 apply to having the mind of Christ?
2. What do you think is the basic attitude of mind one must possess to have the mind of Christ?
3. When one has the mind of Christ, what are some things it will motivate him to do?
4. Discuss some of the areas in which Jesus is a model for His followers.
5. How, in a practical way, can one bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ?" (2 Cor. 10:5)

Lesson Three: The Christian's Walk

Introduction

1. As we now recognize the value of walking as we should in the physical realm, it is even more important that we walk properly in the spiritual realm.
2. Walk: "Figuratively, "signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life, whether of the unregenerate, Eph 4:17, or of the believer, 1 Cor 7:17; Col 2:6." (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of NT Words)
3. The book of Ephesians contains some valuable and practical advice as to how we are to walk.

I. Walk in Good Works (Eph. 2:10)

- A. Jesus sets a proper example. (John 9:4)
- B. In the parable of the talents and its application, judgment is based on what is done or not done. (Matt. 25:14-46)
- C. The Christian is to be producing the fruit of the Spirit, sowing the seed of the kingdom and aiding and edifying others. (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 28:18-20; Jas. 2:14-18)
- E. It is a mind of service and work. (John 9:4; Acts 10:38)

II. Walk Worthy of Your Calling (Eph. 4:1-3)

- A. Consider all beings and factors involved in the Christian's calling.
 1. God the Father. (John 6:44-45)
 2. God the Son. (Matt. 11:28)
 3. God the Holy Spirit. (Rev. 22:17)
 4. The church. (Rev. 22:17)
 5. The gospel. (2 Thess. 2:14)
- B. Walking worthy of your calling includes:
 1. Walking in lowliness—in humility esteeming others before self. (Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:3)
 2. Walking in gentleness—kindness. (Col. 3:12-13)
 3. Being longsuffering and "patient with all." (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:14)
 4. Bearing with one another and forgiving one another. (Col. 3:13)
 5. Walking in love—"the bond of perfection" and that which is greatest. (Col. 3:14; 1 Cor. 13:13)
 6. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:3)

III. Not as the Gentiles (Eph. 4:17-24)

- A. The Gentiles' attitudes and self-pride caused them to give themselves over to uncleanness and lasciviousness thus alienating them from God. (Rom. 1:24-32)
- B. The church at Corinth suffered greatly because they were still walking carnally. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
- C. We cannot live our lives to the flesh because it negatively impacts every facet of our being.
- D. Christianity is not something to be added to one's present lifestyle but a death to the old way of life and birth to the new.

IV. Walk in Love (Eph. 5:2)

- A. One is to walk in love as Christ has loved us. (John 13:34-35)
- B. Walking in love includes doing the will of the Father (John 14:15), producing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and seeking the well-being of all (Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 15:2; Gal. 6:10).

V. Walk as Children of Light (Eph. 5:7-9)

- A. Since “God is light,” as children of God we must walk in the light. (1 John 1:5)
- B. The general conduct of our lives must be consistent with divine truth—we must be righteous in our everyday conduct.

VI. Walk Circumspectly (Eph. 5:15)

- A. To walk circumspectly is to walk accurately, carefully and exactly.
- B. This is the wise way to walk.
 - 1. Those who are wise will understand what the will of the Lord is.
 - 2. It is to make the best use of one’s life and redeem the time.

Conclusion

One’s life as a Christian will be rewarding if he will walk as the Lord would have him to walk.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the “good works” Christians should be doing?
2. How do lowliness, gentleness, being longsuffering, bearing with one another and walking in love relate to one another?
3. How does 1 Peter 4:1-4 relate to not walking as the Gentiles?
4. What was the manner in which Christ loved us and what are we to emulate of His love?
5. In Matthew 5:14, we are told we are to be “the light of the world.” What are we to be and do in that role?
6. Why is walking circumspectly the wise way to walk?

Lesson Four: Dedication to the Lord

Text: Titus 2:11-14

Introduction

1. Titus 2:11-14 reflects the dedication that every Christian should have as we live each day in service to God.
2. Being “zealous of good works” demonstrates true dedication and displays the commitment necessary to “finish the course.”
3. One of the greatest needs of our time is more dedication from those who claim to be the children of God.
4. This lesson is designed to help us understand what dedication is, reveal the key to dedication and list the results of dedication.

I. Understanding Dedication

- A. Dedication is “to set apart to a definite use...to devote to the worship of a divine being...to commit to a goal or way of life.” (Merriam Webster Dictionary)
- B. The Christian’s life is to be devoted to Christ. (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 12:1-2)
- C. The Christian is to bring “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:5)
- D. The dedication and devotion of the Christian is not to be passive but rather to be demonstrated by service. (Heb. 12:28; Titus 2:14)
 1. Why, then, is there such a lack of service today among those who claim to be Christians?
 2. Can a lack of true devotion, true dedication, be the answer?

II. The Key to Dedication

- A. The key to dedication is self-denial.
- B. Consider:
 1. Luke 9:57-62. Following Jesus requires sacrifice, dedication and devotion—putting Him first.
 2. Matthew 16:24. Following Jesus requires self-denial.
 3. Luke 14:33. Jesus requires a complete self-denial and a total commitment to Him and things divine.
 - It was total commitment that stood between the rich young ruler and Jesus. (Mark 10:17-22)

III. Results of Such Dedication

- A. Fellowship with the Lord. (John 10:27-29; 1 John 1:5-7)
- B. All spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3)

- C. A sense of belonging, a sense of family. (Heb. 13:5)
- D. Love for the brethren—appreciation for those who are dedicated. (John 13:35; Col. 3:14)
- E. Forbearance and forgiveness when wronged. (Col. 3:12-13)
- F. Concern for the lost. (Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 6:1)
- G. A personal sense of duty. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- H. A willingness to use whatever resources you have for the cause of Christ.
- I. An eternal reward. (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Conclusion

Is your life one of dedication to the Lord and His cause?

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to live “soberly?” (Titus 2:12)
2. How does being “zealous of good works” demonstrate dedication?
3. How can a Christian bring “every thought in captivity?” (cf. Phil. 4:8)
4. Why is self denial the key to dedication?
5. Why did the rich young ruler balk at the command of Jesus? What does that illustrate?
6. What would be some of the results if every Christian had a personal sense of duty?

Lesson Five: Self-Examination

Text: 2 Corinthians 13:5

Introduction

1. Several passages in Scripture show the importance of self-examination. (1 Cor. 11:28; Psa. 4:4; Lam. 3:40; 1 John 3:18-22)
2. As the Christians in Corinth needed to evaluate themselves by self-examination, we have the same responsibility today.

I. Why One Should Examine Himself

- A. To determine “whether you are in the faith” — whether or not you are faithful. (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Tim. 4:16)
 1. To keep from “drifting.” (Heb. 2:1; 1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Pet. 1:10)
 2. To know one’s standing before God. (2 Tim. 1:12)
- B. To determine if “Jesus Christ is in you.”
 - Christ dwells in every child of God. (Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20; Gal. 3:26-29)
- C. To determine if “you are disqualified.”
 1. KJV and ASV: “except ye be reprobates.”
 2. NASV: “unless indeed you fail the test.”
- D. To determine if you really know yourself.
 1. Without such an examination by the word of God, you reside in an idyllic state of self-approval.
 2. Self-approval causes you to minimize your faults while magnifying the fruits of others. (1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Cor. 10:18)

II. The Standard by Which One Is to Examine Himself

- A. Not:
 1. One’s own standards. (Gal. 6:3)
 2. Not the standards of others — friends are prejudiced in favor of you while enemies are against you. (1 Cor. 4:6)
- B. The proper standard is the word of God because only His principles of right and wrong are to be utilized if one is to be approved by Him. (2 Tim. 2:15)

III. Questions One Should Ask in His Self-Examination

- A. Am I in the faith? (Gal. 3:26-27)
 - It could be that I entered it but then have departed from it. (1 Tim. 1:18-19)
- B. Is Christ in me? If so:
 1. I have a working faith. (Eph. 3:17; Gal. 5:6)
 2. God’s word is dwelling in me. (Eph. 5:19)

3. My mind is set on things above. (Col. 3:1-2)
 4. I have been transformed. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- C. Am I pure in heart and life? (Matt. 5:8; Luke 13:3)
- D. Do I really have a loving heart? (1 John 3:15; Matt. 18:21-35)
- E. Am I really humble?
1. Can I see my own "speck?" (Matt. 7:3)
 2. Do I consider others better than myself? (Phil. 2:3)
 3. Am I filled with self-righteousness? (Luke 18:9)
 4. Do I sit in judgment on others and play "God?" (Matt. 7:1-5)
- F. Do I hate sin? (Luke 15:21, 30; 1 Cor. 9:27)
- G. Do I use God's gift of speech to bless or curse? Am I a peace maker or peace breaker? (Prov. 6:16-19; Gal. 5:18-24)
- H. What about my hearing? Am I eager for good news or bad news? Do I repeat gossip?
- I. Do I love the body, the church?
- Do I strive to keep unity, support the assemblies, contribute, etc.?
- J. Do I really believe that I will be judged? (Prov. 27:1; Isa. 38:1)

Conclusion

1. Knowing one's real condition is the first step to doing what is right.
2. In your self-examination:
 - a. What you may find may be gratifying or regrettable.
 - b. You will find out whether you are approved or disapproved.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does self-examination determine if one really knows himself?
2. Why, according to 2 Corinthians 10:12, is it not wise to measure ourselves by ourselves or compare ourselves to those who commend themselves?
3. How can a person know if Christ is in him?
4. What does it mean to be pure in heart?
5. How can a person show he loves the church, the body of Christ?

Lesson Six: Fervent in Spirit

Text: Romans 12:11

Introduction

1. As Christians we realize we have work to do. (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14)
2. Those good works include growing and maturing in Christ, reaching out to the lost, and encouraging and strengthening brethren.
3. "An idle man and a Christian are names which do not harmonize...he whose life is spent in ease and in doing nothing, should doubt altogether his religion. God has assigned us much to accomplish; and he will hold us answerable for the faithful performance of it." (Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the NT, commenting on Romans 12:11)
4. Romans 12:11 is a key passage in relation to the attitude a Christian must have when doing those good works for it shows there are two attitudes one can have in approaching the work of the Lord.
 - a. "Lagging in diligence."
 - b. "Fervent in spirit."
5. This lesson will analyze these two attitudes and show why the latter, being "fervent in spirit, is preferred.

I. "Lagging in Diligence"

- A. The phrase "not lagging in diligence" is variously translated.
 1. KJV: "Not slothful in business."
 2. NAS: "Not lagging behind in diligence."
 3. ASV: "In diligence not slothful."
 4. NIV: "Never be lacking in zeal."
 5. RSV: "Never flag in zeal."
 6. ESV: "Do not be slothful in zeal."
- B. A definition of terms.
 1. Lagging: slothful, lazy, indolent. "[okneros, okneo] to delay, to feel loathe, to be slow, to hesitate" (Wuest Word Studies, Vol. I, 214)
 2. Diligence:
 - a. "To make haste, do one's best, take care, desire. The idea of making haste, being eager, giving diligence, and putting forth effort are in the word. The words speaks of intense effort and determination." (Wuest, 212)
 - b. "Not flagging in zeal." (W.E. Vine, Expository Dict. of NT Words, 1063)
- C. The Bible is filled with warnings against such an attitude. (Amos 6:1; Jer. 48:10)
- D. The Lord requires diligence of those who are following Him. (2 Pet. 1:5; 2 Cor. 8:7; Heb. 9:6-12; 2 Cor. 7:11-12)

II. "Fervent in Spirit"

A. Fervent defined:

1. To be hot, to boil, to be on fire, glowing.
2. "To boil with heat, be hot, used of boiling anger, love, zeal for what is good or bad."
(Wuest, 214)

B. Examples of this attitude.

1. Jesus. (John 2:17; cf. Psa. 69:9)
2. Apollos. (Acts 18:24-25)
 - a. He was first concerned with doing.
 - b. He was then concerned with doing it accurately because zeal must be accompanied by knowledge. (Rom. 10:1-3)

C. The importance of this attitude is seen in the example of the Israelites under the law of Moses.

1. It was commanded by God. (Deut. 6:5)
2. The whole law hung on it. (Matt. 22:34-40)
3. How sad it is that in the Old Testament we see a scarcity of it. (2 Kings 23:25)

D. Fervor, ardor and enthusiasm are the keys to success in the Lord's work. (Rev. 3:14-16)

- "The one man whom the Risen Christ could not stand was the man who was neither hot nor cold...The Christian may burn out, but he cannot rust out." (William Barclay, Revelation, Vol. I)

E. Ephesians 6:6 counsels us to be "doing the will of God from the heart."

1. Sadly, this fervency of spirit is often lacking.
2. The fire and enthusiasm of the first century church is not often seen today.

Conclusion

May we all stop "dragging our feet" and give ourselves enthusiastically to doing the good works for which we have been created and devote ourselves wholeheartedly to the Lord.

Discussion Questions

1. What usually happens to the "Christian" who is "lagging in diligence?"
2. Why is it so important to be diligent in serving the Lord?
3. How did Jesus manifest a fervent spirit while on earth?
4. Why can it be said that the Old Law and the Prophets hung on fervency of spirit?
5. Why do you think that, on the most part, fervency of spirit is lacking among those who claim to be God's people today?

Lesson Seven: Second Mile Living

Text: Matthew 5:38-48

Introduction

1. In the text, Jesus, as was His custom, used those things with which His listeners were familiar to teach great Spiritual truths.
 - The presence of the Roman Empire in Palestine was something with which every Jew would be familiar.
2. Roman couriers were authorized to press into service any available person or beast for the transportation of official documents but they could not compel any citizen to go further than one mile.
3. What Jesus is teaching.
 - a. Do not go a mile with bitter and obvious resentment but go two miles with cheerfulness and good grace.
 - b. The text, as much of the Sermon on the Mount, is a lesson on attitude.
4. We should live with the attitude of the second mile.

I. A Comparison of the First Mile to the Second

A. The first mile is a mile of compulsion.

1. Compel: “to impress into service.” (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of NT Words)
2. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. (Matt. 27:32)
3. Those “Christians” who only walk the first mile ask the wrong questions which betrays a false concept of service to God. They ask:
 - a. “Why should I do more?”
 - b. “How many services do I have to attend?”
 - c. “How much do I have to give?”
 - d. “How much work do I have to do?”
 - e. “Do I have to attend gospel meetings and other special events?”
4. Those who ask such questions:
 - a. Are trying to see how little they can get by with.
 - b. Desire to do the minimum required in order to reach heaven.

B. The second mile is a mile of grace.

1. It is a display of goodness and kindness.
2. It is accomplished by love for the Lord.
3. Duty becomes privilege—willingness overflows obligation.
3. Those who travel the second mile have an attitude of “What more can I do?” (1 Cor. 15:58)

II. Other Applications of This Attitude

A. Turn the other cheek. (Matt. 5:38-39)

1. Jesus is speaking of a personal challenge—both an injury and an insult.

2. In regards to a personal challenge, turn the other cheek, rise above a personal affront and follow the example of Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21-23)
- B. "Let him have your cloak." (Matt. 5:40)
1. By law the cloak could not be taken from a man. (Ex. 22:26-27)
 2. The lesson: The Christian never stands upon his "rights" because he considers others before he considers himself. (Rom. 12:10-11; Phil. 2:3-4)
- C. "Give to him who asks." (Matt. 5:42)
1. This is the attitude one should have toward the needs of others.
 2. Jesus is obviously speaking of those who are truly needy.
 - a. One has the responsibility to provide for his own. (1 Tim. 5:8)
 - b. If one will not work he is not to eat. (2 Thess. 3:10)
 - c. One cannot subsidize sin or slothfulness.
 3. The Christian's attitude must be proper toward those who are truly in need.
 - a. He must show true faith. (Jas. 2:14-16)
 - b. He must love in word and deed. (1 John 3:17-18)
 - c. He is to be neither selfish nor revengeful but rather liberal and generous.
- D. "Love your enemies." (Matt. 5:43-48)
1. Christians are to love, be full of goodwill, and exhibit it by showing interest in others, even their "enemies."
 2. Anyone can love the loving but it takes a "second mile" attitude to love the unlovable.

Conclusion

1. There is a passage that all those who are trying to get by with the minimum of service to the Lord need to read. (Luke 17:10)
2. Though it is difficult for it involves sacrifice, as Christians, we must go the second mile because it is the one with abundant reward.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is compulsion not a good motive for action?
2. Why is trying to do the minimum one must do to reach heaven a dangerous practice?
3. How does "abounding in the work of the Lord" relate to second mile living?
4. By teaching that one is to "turn the other cheek," was He saying that one can never defend himself? Explain.
5. Why should a Christians never stand upon his "rights?"
6. What do you think it takes in order to love one's enemies?

Lesson Eight: The Importance of Bible Study

Introduction

1. 2 Timothy 2:15 in the KJV reads, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..."
 - a. NKJV: "Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God..."
 - b. ESV: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved..."
2. Based on the above, studying God's word is just a segment of all things involved in giving diligence or doing one's best
 - a. A person could study and still lack diligence.
 - b. However, if one studied with the idea of being approved of God, he would put forth all effort to meet God's favor.
3. The apostle Peter commands us to add "knowledge" to our faith. (2 Pet. 1:5; cf. 2 Pet. 3:18)
 - a. It is only through a study of the Bible that we can learn what God expects and requires of us.
 - b. It is sad that many who claim to be Christians do not seem to appreciate the Bible or properly understand its teachings.
4. This lesson will focus on the importance of Bible study by noting some things that hinder proper study of it, listing some things that help one to properly study it and considering the benefits derived from a study of it.

I. Things That Hinder Bible Study

- A. Reading without intending or expecting to understand the Bible.
 1. Reading from a sense of duty.
 2. Reading irregularly without any system.
- B. Studying to try to prove preconceived notions.
- C. Making the Bible a book of wonders.
- D. Interpreting from evil motives.
 1. Like trying to justify drinking from Matthew 15:11 and 1 Timothy 5:23.
 2. Like trying to uphold division or sectarianism from Mark 9:38-40 and Acts 15:36-41.

II. Things That Help Bible Study

- A. Mental industry.
 1. Searching the Scriptures and meditating on them with a diligent effort and desire to learn.
 2. The disciples inquired about the meaning of parables (Luke 8:9) and the Bereans searched the Scriptures to make sure what Paul taught them was true (Acts 17:11).
 3. You cannot learn the Bible by a casual reading.
- B. A desire to know and do the truth. (John 7:17; 2 Thess. 2:7-12)
- C. Good common sense. Common sense tells us:
 1. We are no longer under the law of Moses.
 2. There are no miracles today.
 3. The Lord's Supper is not the literal flesh and blood of Jesus.
- D. Aids to Bible study.
 - Different translations of the Bible, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, word studies, encyclopedias, a knowledge of words, Bible history, geography and customs of the day.
- E. An expectation to understand. (Eph. 3:1-4; 5:17; John 8:32)

III. Benefits Derived from Bible Study

- A. Equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- B. Food provided for the soul. (1 Pet. 2:1-3)
 - 1. We must lay aside the carnal appetite and desire to be filled with the word in order to grow and mature in Christ. (Col. 3:16)
 - 2. That growth can only take place by feasting upon the word of God. (Heb. 5:12-14)
- C. We are able to see ourselves as God sees us.
 - 1. The Bible is a mirror to the soul. (Jas. 1:23-25)
 - 2. The Bible mirror show the ills of the soul.
- D. It stabilizes us doctrinally. (Eph. 4:14)
 - 1. Error thrives on ignorance.
 - 2. One of the causes of departures from the truth among God's people today is ignorance.
- E. Protects us from falling away through temptation. (Matt. 4; Psa. 119:11; 2 Pet. 1:10)
- F. You cannot obey God without a knowledge of His word.
 - 1. We are told to teach others but we cannot do it without first knowing what to teach.
 - 2. We are to "be ready to give a defense... for the hope" that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15) but that requires knowledge of what gives us that hope.
 - 3. To "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3), we must know it.
- G. It prepares us for the judgment.
 - 1. It builds us up and gives us an inheritance. (Acts 20:32)
 - 2. The word will judge us in the last day. (John 12:48)
 - 3. Many will be surprised in the day of judgment to learn that God demanded certain things of them of which they knew nothing because they had failed to properly study the word of God.

Conclusion

- 1. Entirely too much depends on the Bible and our knowledge of it for us to neglect to properly study it.
- 2. May we give ourselves to reading and studying the Bible and not view it as a chore but a blessing because God has given everything we need to know in order to have eternal life.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why does proper Bible study take diligent effort?
- 2. Why is it a dangerous practice to use the Bible to prove preconceived ideas?
- 3. What role does common sense have in relation to studying and understanding the Bible?
- 4. How does the Bible help us see ourselves as God sees us?
- 5. What relationships should exist between Bible study and obedience?

Lesson Nine: Adorning the Gospel

Text: Titus 2:9-10

Introduction

1. Though the above passage is specifically directed to “bondservants,” its principle applies to all who wear the name of Christ—all Christians are to “adorn the doctrine of Christ.”
2. “Adorn” is from the Greek word “kosmeo” from which we get our word “cosmetic.”
 - a. “To arrange, to put in order, to ornament...one’s person.” (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of NT Words)
 - b. “To embellish with honor...” (J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the NT)
 - c. “The teaching, though really practical, can be plausibly alleged to be mere theory; it must then, by good works, be rendered attractive to them that are without.” (W.E. Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek NT, The Pastoral Epistles)
3. This lesson will focus on the responsibilities to “adorn the gospel of God” by considering:
 - a. That God is concerned as to how we are adorned.
 - b. Those things which Christians are to have in their lives in order to adorn the gospel.

I. God Is Concerned as to How We Are Adorned

- A. People are often judged by what they wear.
 1. Judah thought Tamar was a harlot because of her veil. (Gen. 38:14-15)
 2. The rich man show his social status by being clothed in “purple and fine linen.” (Luke 16:10)
 3. In mockery people clothed Jesus with a purple robe as a king. (Mark 15:7; John 19:2-5)
- B. Since God does not place emphasis on the outward appearance but the heart (1 Sam. 16:7), the elect of God are to be clothed in both a figurative and literal sense, in the right fashion. (Isa. 61:10)
- C. In the New Testament, characteristics are required in the life of the Christian that are compared to putting on articles of clothing to be worn to honor God and impress others. (1 Pet. 3:1-4)
- D. Good works and holy lives glorify God.
 1. One pleases God when he decorates his life with good works.
 2. The attitude of faithful, ready and humble obedience shows how beautiful the gospel can make our lives.
- E. Colossians 3:12-14 contains a list of certain characteristics with which a Christian is to be adorned thus adorning the doctrine of God.
 1. They stand in contrast to those things that are not to be a part of one’s life. (Col. 3:5, 8-9)
 2. They are not optional but are required “dress.”

II. Things That Adorn the Gospel with Which Christians Are to Decorate Their Lives (Col. 3:12-14)

- A. Tender mercies.
 1. “Tender mercies” is translated in different ways in different versions.
 - a. KJV: “Bowels of mercies.”
 - b. NASV and ASV: “Heart of compassion.”
 - c. Literally: “Bowels of compassion.”

2. To the Greeks the intestines were regarded as the seat of affections and the more violent passions—the “bowels” of ancient times would be the “heart” of today.
 3. “Mercies” has reference to compassion and kindness, being touched by others and their plight. (Rom. 12:15)
- B. Kindness.
1. Kindness carries with it the idea of gentleness.
 2. A Christian’s life is to be decorated with an attitude of gentleness toward others. (Gal. 6:1)
- C. Humility.
1. Consider the example of Paul. (Acts 20:17-19)
 2. Humility is “having a humble opinion of one’s self; a deep sense of moral littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind.” (Thayer)
 3. We must be aware of false modesty otherwise know as subtle pride. (Col. 2:18)
- D. Meekness.
1. Meekness must not be confused with passiveness or be taken to mean that one is spineless or afraid to oppose error.
 - a. Moses had a strong spirit and a courageous heart yet he was meek. (Num. 12:3)
 - b. Jesus was not weak when He ran the money changers out of the Temple or rebuked the Pharisees, yet He is the best example of meekness. (Matt. 11:29)
 2. Meekness is evenness and firmness of mind and denotes power under control like that of a wild horse that has been broken to ride or pull a wagon.
- E. Longsuffering.
1. To be longsuffering means to be of a firm spirit, to be patient and enduring.
 2. The Christian must not be weak and lose heart though distress and discouragement may come his way. (Rev. 2:10)
 3. Matthew 10:24-33 gives five reasons for putting on longsuffering.
 - a. We will not suffer more than our Master. (vv. 24-25)
 - b. All will be exposed someday. (vv. 26-27)
 - c. Men must fear God rather than man. (v. 28)
 - d. The value of man in God’s sight. (vv. 29-31)
 - e. Christ will approve the faithful someday. (vv. 32-33)
 4. The Christian must run with patience the race that is set before him. (Heb. 12:1-2)
- F. Bearing with and forgiving one another.
1. It is easy to bear with those who have a natural kinship to us but Christians are to bear with all in their inconsistencies and peculiar ways because of their spiritual kinship (Gal. 3:26-27) which is far greater (Matt. 12:46-50).
 2. “If anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” (Col. 3:13)
 - a. “Complaint” means complaint of accusation.
 - b. “Complaint” is from the Greek, *momphe*, to find fault, blame, censure, and, more importantly, occasion of complaint.
 3. If someone has given us reason to complain, we are to:
 - a. Harbor no malice.
 - b. Be ready to do him good.
 - c. Be ready to declare that we have forgiven him when he asks for it.
 - d. Afterwards, treat him kindly as if he has not injured us—as God treats us when He forgives.

4. Christians are to forgive in the same manner that Christ forgives them.
 - a. "And if he repent, forgive him." (Luke 17:3)
 - One cannot forgive a person who does not repent, no more than God will. (Nahum 1:3)
 - b. The forgiveness of Christ is complete (Heb. 8:12) and he forgets the sin.
- G. The crowning act: "put on love."
 1. "But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection." (Col. 3:14)
 2. Love for God and man is the principle which unites all other virtues and renders them consistent and permanent.
 3. Love is the one thing that includes all that goes to make up perfection.

Conclusion

1. Adorning the gospel may be difficult at times but it is the task of every Christian.
2. The Christian's life is to be one which adorns the gospel in such a way that it makes it and obedience to it attractive to others.

Discussion Questions

1. In order to "adorn the gospel," must Christians be concerned with both their outward appearance and their "heart," the inner person? Explain.
2. Why do good works "adorn the gospel?"
3. Do you think there is any significance to the fact that Paul began his list in Colossians 3:12=14 with "tender mercies" (heart of compassion). Explain.
4. Why are the five reasons given in Matthew 10:24-33 for putting on longsuffering so important?
5. Why does bearing with and forgiving others always seem to be difficult to do?
6. What is meant when it says that love is "the bond of perfection?"

Lesson Ten: Dealing with Imperfection

Text: Ecclesiastes 7:20

Introduction

1. Ecclesiastes 7:20 presents a thought that runs like a silver thread through the Bible: man is imperfect, he is a sinner. (2 Chron. 6:36; Psa. 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:9-10)
2. The greatest men of the Bible were all sinners—with a single exception.
 - a. Abraham lied and caused his wife to lie. (Gen. 12:10-19)
 - b. Noah became drunk. (Gen. 9:20-21)
 - c. Moses disobeyed God. (Num. 20:11-12)
 - d. David sinned greatly with Bathsheba and against Uriah. (2 Sam. 11)
 - e. Peter denied the Lord and swore a false oath. (Mark 4:66-72)
3. There are many ways that we could treat this plain truth.
 - a. Some would not be beneficial.
 - b. But there are some helpful ways to approach this common feature of our human existence.

I. It Should Produce Personal Meekness and Self-Abasement

- A. Why do so many of us only admit our sins and sinfulness at the times of our most tragic folly: when we get caught?
 - David is a perfect example. (2 Sam. 11-12)
- B. Jesus taught us to admit our sins when we pray. (Matt. 6:9-13)
- C. A Christian should never become complacent or self-satisfied, he should pray and confess his sins every day. (1 John 1:8-9)

II. It Should Help Us See Our Neighbors and Their Sins Differently

- A. The universal human tendency is to condone in ourselves what we condemn in others.
 - I just “make mistakes” but my brother “sins.”
- B. We must never be judgmental of the faults of others in a way that we would refuse to have ourselves viewed. (Matt. 7:1-5)
- C. We must remember that forgiveness for our sins is a two-sided affair: it is conditioned upon our own willingness to forgive others. (Matt. 6:14-15)
- D. Yet it should never cause us to be tolerant of sin or compromise with sin or sinners while they are still in sin.
 - Notice how stern the ex-denier Peter was in his treatment of the sins of others when they were guilty. (Acts 5:4; 8:20-23)

III. It Should Help Us Avoid Setting Before Us Human Examples: All Are Men—All Are Sinners

- A. The phrase “without sin” is used only of Jesus in the Bible.
 - No other person ever qualified to wear it, none will ever again. (1 Pet. 2:21-22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15)

- B. We are only to follow after persons when it is sure they follow Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1)
- C. Every human being will eventually fail in many ways: Christ is the one and only perfect model.

IV. It Should Help Us to Realize Our Dependence Upon Christ for Salvation

- A. The works of Paul abound in doxologies praising God's grace. (Rom. 3:23-24; 5:8-11; 7:24-25a)
- B. Remembering his past life of sin, Paul felt his own absolute dependence upon the mercy of God.
 - He was saved because God saved him. (1 Cor. 15:9-10)
- C. When we come to know our own sinfulness, we recognize there is no room at all for pride. (1 Cor. 1:30-31)

V. It Should Make Us Cultivate Certain Elements of Our Character

- A. We should cultivate the utmost vigilance over ourselves.
 - A man who has a tendency to stumble will be careful how he walks. (1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 2:12; Rom. 11:20)
- B. It will cause us to cultivate confidence and avoid despair.
 - 1. God did not cast off Noah, Abraham, Moses or Peter because they were sinners at one time or on one occasion.
 - 2. The Lord forgives those who repent. (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
- C. Cultivate patience so that you can finish the race. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

Conclusion

1. All of us are sinners, that is certain.
2. The difference between the Christian and the high handed sinner is the way they respond to that fact: one man repents and renounces his wrongs while the other refuses.
3. The Christian loathes his sins and lives for a time when he will be completely rid of them while the rebellious sinner loves his sins and joyfully wallows in them.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between being sorry you have sinned and repenting of your sin?
2. Why do so many wait to confess their sins only when they are caught?
3. Why is it that we have a tendency to convict sin in others but condone it in ourselves?
4. Why does a recognition of Jesus as the source of our salvation eliminate pride?
5. How can we cultivate vigilance, confidence and patience in our lives in matters related to salvation.

Lesson Eleven: Loving as Jesus Loved

Text: John 13:1-17

Introduction

1. While in the upper room with His disciples just prior to His arrest, the illegal trials and crucifixion, Jesus gave them a “new commandment.” (John 13:34-35)
2. If one is to fulfill this commandment, he must know how Jesus loved but to find that out, one need not look any farther than the same chapter and Jesus’ activities in that upper room. (John 13:1-17)

I. We Love As Jesus Loves When We Humble Ourselves Before Others

- A. As “Lord and Teacher” His disciples should have washed His feet but He humbly reversed roles.
- B. Humility is to be a characteristic of the follower of Christ. (Col. 3:12; Titus 3:2)
- C. Such humility should cause one to not only submit to God but also to one another. (1 Pet. 5:5)

II. We Love as Jesus Loves When We Serve Others

- A. Consider what Jesus said in John 13:14-15.
- B. Jesus came to earth to be a servant. (Phil. 2:5-7; Matt. 20:28)
- C. The Christian is a servant.
 1. Paul, James, Peter and Jude all referred to themselves as “bondservants.”
 2. As Christians, to properly love God and one another, we must develop a servant mentality. (Matt. 25:31-40)

III. We Love as Jesus Loves When We Quit Competing

- A. Jesus’ washing of His disciples feet may have been in response to their rivalry at the table. (Luke 22:24)
 1. This competition had been an ongoing problem. (Mark 9:33-34)
 2. The church at Corinth shows that such competition is carnal. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
- B. Such competition is the very opposite of what Christ desires of His followers and it has no place in His kingdom. (Luke 22:24-27)
- C. Christians are to esteem and prefer one another. (Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 12:10)

IV. We Love as Jesus Loves When We Correct One Another in Love

- A. It was out of His love for them that Jesus addressed their problem.
- B. If the Christian truly loves, he will be concerned when he sees a brother/sister who is faltering.
 1. Parents who properly love their children will correct them as needed.
 2. Christians are to encourage the weak and seek to restore the fallen. (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20)

V. We Love as Jesus Loves When We Let Others Love Us

- A. Peter, at first, refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet. (John 13:6-10)
 - 1. He knew that this was a task that was only given to the lowest servant in the house.
 - 2. Perhaps he thought that this was a test and by refusing Jesus' actions he would pass with flying colors.
- B. There are times as Christians we are to let others serve us. (Gal. 6:2)

VI. We Love as Jesus Loves When We Love Unconditionally

- A. Consider the men whose feet Jesus washed.
 - 1. All would soon forsake Him.
 - 2. One would betray Him.
 - 3. One would deny Him not once but three times.
- B. We do not have the right to pick and choose among brethren as to whom we will love or not love. (1 Pet. 1:22)

Conclusion

- 1. Do your brethren know that you love them as Christ loves them?
- 2. Are you humbly serving them, preferring them, lovingly correcting them when needed and allowing them to love you?
- 3. Greatness in the kingdom and salvation of the soul come by loving and serving as Jesus loved and served.

Discussion Questions

- 1. How is to "love one another" a "new commandment?"
- 2. Why is humility such an important quality for the Christian to possess?
- 3. What is involved in order to develop a "servant mentality?"
- 4. Why is competition so harmful to the Lord's body?
- 5. Why is it important to allow others to love and serve you?
- 6. What is meant by unconditional love?

Lesson Twelve: First Things First

Introduction

1. To be successful in any aspect of life whether education, business, or family, one must set the proper priorities.
 - The principle of prioritizing is also applicable in spiritual matters as seen in the life of the apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2:2)
2. In teaching others, and in all other facets of our spiritual lives, we need to prioritize—to learn to put first things first.
3. This lesson will consider several “firsts”—those things the word of God teaches us to prioritize in our lives.

I. Give Yourself to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

- A. The Macedonians had given beyond their ability because they had given their lives to the Lord.
- B. Other things will be much easier if we would give ourselves to the Lord. (1 Tim. 4:16)
- C. The apostle Paul is an example worthy of note. (Phil. 3:4-8)

II. Cleanse the Inside First (Matt. 23:23-26)

- A. Personal purity is to be a priority in the life of the Christian.
- B. The heart is the seat of our emotions, intellect and will. (Matt. 15:10-20)
- C. Your “heart” will focus on that which you value most highly. (Matt. 6:19-21)

III. Cast the Beam Out of Your Own Eye (Matt. 7:1-5)

- A. It is always easier to see the faults of others but not very pleasant to look for faults in our own lives.
 - A friend who preaches received a note from a member informing him that he had two misspelled words in the bulletin. The note had 13 misspelled words.
- B. We need to keep ourselves clean so we can help others. (1 Tim. 5:22)

IV. Be Reconciled to Your Brother (Matt. 5:21-24)

- A. One cannot have a proper relationship with God if he does not have a proper attitude toward and relationship with his brother. (1 John 4:20-21)
- B. God will not accept our worship if we harbor animosity.
 1. Jesus, in Matthew 5, states that reconciliation takes precedence over worship. (vv. 23-24)
 2. It is possible to “eat and drink” judgment to ourselves. (1 Cor. 11:23-29)

V. Be Concerned with Saving Others: The Example of Andrew (John 1:40-42)

- A. Andrew learned about Jesus then found Peter and brought him to the Lord.
- B. Growth in the kingdom depends upon each member feeling a personal responsibility to share the message of salvation which will cause them to be involved. (Matt. 5:13-16)

VI. Seek First the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:31-33)

- A. The highest priority the Christian should have is to do the will of God.
- B. There is a great need for righteousness and every Christian should make it his/her priority to “hunger and thirst” after it. (Matt. 5:6)
- C. True righteousness will result in:
 - 1. Members at every service. (Heb. 10:25)
 - 2. Growth in the congregation. (1 Tim. 4:16)
 - 3. Our needs will be supplied. (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19)

Conclusion

- 1. If we expect to please God, we must put Him and His will first in everything.
- 2. Determine now to prioritize your life by giving attention to those things which are most important.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why is it important to prioritize our spiritual lives?
- 2. What does it mean to give yourself to the Lord?
- 3. Why will cleansing the “inside” make the “outside” clean?
- 4. Describe the relationship between worshiping God and reconciling with others.
- 5. Why do you think so many Christians seem unconcerned in regards to personal evangelism?
- 6. Why is doing the will of God the Christian’s highest priority?

Lesson Thirteen: Choosing Friends

Text: Proverbs 12:26

Introduction

1. Everyone has friends of some kind.
2. Some friends are good, others are bad so we should choose our friends carefully. (Prov. 12:26)
3. Christians should stop and consider:
 - a. The need for and value of friends.
 - b. What a friend really is.
 - c. The principles behind choosing friends.

I. The Need for Close Friends

- A. We need the close association of others.
 1. We cannot happily or meaningfully live our lives to ourselves. (Gen. 2:18)
 2. No one lives unto himself. (Rom. 14:7)
- B. We need the love our friends have for us.
 1. Life is much more pleasant when we have those who care for us and our welfare.
 2. We need someone whom we know loves us no matter what may come our way and theirs. (Prov. 17:17)
- C. We need someone to share our joy and happiness. (Rom. 12:15)
- D. We need someone to help us when we need cheering. (Prov. 27:9)
- E. We need relaxation and recreation from the routine and pressures of life so we enjoy visiting with friends.
- F. There is almost an infinite number of reasons why we need friends.

II. What Is a Friend?

- A. Simply, a friend is one with whom you associate.
- B. Definitions.
 1. "A person who has a real liking for and confidence in another person." (Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary)
 2. "One who is 'loved, dear...'" (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of NT Words.)
- C. The word "friendship" occurs once in the New Testament. (Jas. 4:4)
 1. It come from philia which is akin to philos which is translated "love."
 2. Vine suggests it means "loving as well as being loved." (Vine)
- D. Biblical examples of friendship illustrate this idea of loving and being loved.
 1. David and Jonathan. (1 Sam. 18:1-2)
 2. Paul and Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:3-5)
- E. The word means the same today as it did in Biblical times.

- F. Friends fall into two categories: good and bad.
1. Good friends are not just good to us but good for us.
 2. We must not choose friends who lead us astray or allow our children to choose friends who will lead them astray such as Jonadab who led his friend Amnon astray. (2 Sam. 13:1-14)

III. Some Guidelines in Choosing Friends

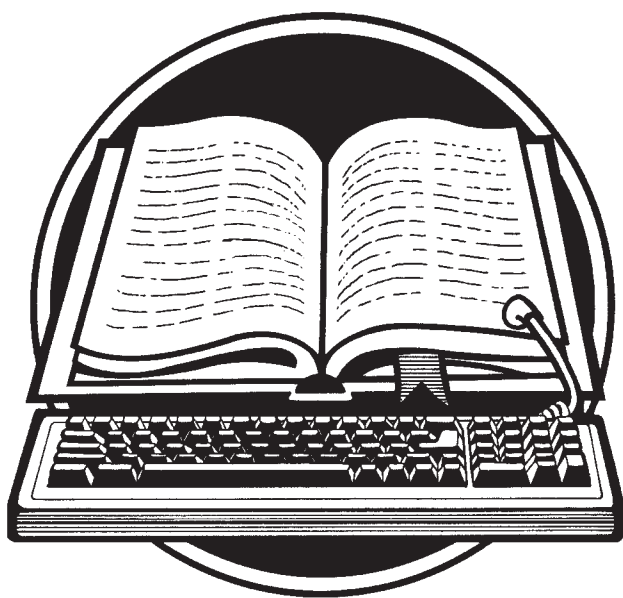
- A. Choose carefully. (Prov. 12:26)
- B. Apply the principle of 1 Corinthians 15:33.
- C. Realize it is better to have just a few friends who will be the right kind than to have a multitude of the kind who could cause you to lose your soul. (Matt. 16:26)
- D. Choose a friend who:
1. Will be a good example to you and others. (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Cor. 11:1)
 2. Has good morals, whose standard is the word of God. (1 Cor. 15:33)
 3. Is modest. (1 Tim. 2:9)
 4. Abstains from strong drink and drunkenness. (1 Pet. 4:3; Eph. 5:18)
 5. Can bridle his/her tongue. (Jas. 1:26)
 6. Is honest. (Luke 8:15)
 7. Is law-abiding. (Rom. 13:1-7)
 8. Has respect for God and things spiritual in nature who regards spiritual things as more important than material. (Matt. 6:24-33)

Conclusion

1. Friends are priceless (Prov. 18:24) and we should thank God daily for the good friends we have.
2. No amount of money could be enough to replace true friends, especially Christians.
3. Let us all be friends of Jesus. (John 15:14)

Discussion Questions

1. What are some reasons why we need close friends?
2. Describe the link between friendship and love.
3. Why do "evil companions" corrupt good habits and morals?
4. Give a good "working definition" of friendship.
5. Can one have friends who are not Christians? Explain.
6. Proverbs 18:24 says that there is "a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Describe that kind of friend.



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